

15 January 2026

FOI Ref 22314

Request - You asked Staffordshire Police (SP) the following:

Request for information relating to police attendance at abnormal load movements to and from Froghall Junction – ST10 2HA.

I am writing on behalf of ***** in connection with historic abnormal load movements involving the delivery and collection of railway vehicles, to and from Froghall Junction, Froghall, Staffordshire, ST10 2HA.

This request is made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It does not seek personal data and is not a data subject access request.

Background and purpose of this request

As part of a recent internal governance review and the preparation of our year-end accounts, we have reviewed the cumulative cost associated with police attendance for railway vehicles movements by road to and from ***** over recent years. While Staffordshire Police have at no point invoiced ***** directly, these charges have been raised to our hauliers and passed on to us.

In considering this issue, we have also taken into account correspondence provided to us in June 2024 by the force's Abnormal Load Officer, which explained the factors relied upon when determining that police escorts were required on certain routes. Those factors included vehicle dimensions and weight, route geometry, the presence of single or double solid white lines, and the absence of legal powers for hauliers or private escort vehicles to stop or direct traffic. The correspondence indicated that, in the officer's view, certain movements could not be completed lawfully without a police escort.

We fully recognise the importance of road safety and risk assessment. Our purpose in making this request is not to challenge policing decisions in principle, but to understand, for the record, the basis on which police attendance at these movements was treated as mandatory and chargeable, and whether such attendance arose from haulier requests or from operational decisions taken by the police.

Scope of this request

This request is limited as follows:

- Time period: the last three years.
- Location: movements to or from Froghall Junction, Froghall, Staffordshire, ST10 2HA.
- Load type: railway vehicles.
- Authority: records held by Staffordshire Police only.

We are not seeking information about unrelated abnormal load movements, nor sensitive tactical or operational detail.

Information requested

For the movements and period described above, we request the following information, insofar as it is held:

1. Confirmation of each occasion on which an STGO notification was received by Staffordshire Police in relation to movements to or from Froghall Junction.

2. Confirmation of whether police attendance or escort was provided, or deemed necessary, for each such movement.
3. Confirmation of whether police attendance was provided following:
 - a specific request made by the haulier; or
 - an operational decision taken by Staffordshire Police following receipt of the notification from the haulier.
4. Where police attendance was treated as chargeable, confirmation of whether there is a record showing that the haulier stated that the movement would not proceed unless police officers were present i.e. this was requested by the haulier or whether this was in fact notified as being required by the police.
5. Confirmation of whether police attendance was classified as a Special Police Service or as operational policing in each case.
6. Copies of, or extracts from, any written risk assessments, decision records or internal guidance relied upon when determining that a police escort was required for these movements.
7. Copies of, or extracts from, any records showing charges raised to hauliers in connection with police attendance at these movements (with personal data, vehicle registrations, routes, timings and other sensitive details redacted as necessary).

Clarification regarding escort criteria

For clarity, we also seek explanation of the following matters, which arise directly from the rationale set out in the June 2024 correspondence.

The correspondence indicates that police escorts are required because vehicles of this size cannot traverse parts of the route without crossing centre line markings or otherwise breaching road traffic legislation, and that only police officers have the legal powers to manage traffic in such circumstances. The tractor and trailer combination used for these movements remains materially the same dimensions whether travelling loaded or empty.

Accordingly, we request clarification of:

8. On what basis police escorts have been required or provided when the vehicle is loaded, but not required or provided when the same vehicle travels empty; and
9. Whether the determining factor in requiring a police escort is the physical dimensions of the vehicle, the presence of a load, or some other recorded criteria.

Additional contextual clarification

We also wish to place on record a further observation, which we raise neutrally and without criticism of individual officers.

On a number of occasions, police attendance at movements has appeared to involve a level of engagement beyond simply facilitating the movement itself. This has included time spent examining the tractor unit and trailer, reviewing driver and operator records, and considering the compliance of the haulier's own escort vehicles prior to the movement commencing.

We fully acknowledge that there may be lawful and appropriate reasons for such checks, and we do not assume otherwise. However, we note that this level of engagement appears to involve the exercise of general enforcement and compliance functions, rather than the provision of a narrowly defined escort service stipulated by the police. We raise this point solely because it is relevant to understanding the nature of police involvement in these movements, and whether such involvement was properly characterised as a chargeable Special Police Service or as operational policing undertaken in the public interest.

Redactions and handling

We fully accept that certain information may properly be redacted, including personal data, vehicle registrations, precise routes, timings or sensitive operational commentary. We are content for such redactions to be applied where necessary. Our interest is limited to understanding the decision-making and charging basis, rather than the tactical execution of any movement.

This request is made in good faith and in the interests of transparency, consistency and proper governance, reflecting the cumulative financial impact of these arrangements on a not-for-profit railway that relies heavily on volunteer effort and public support.

We would be grateful if you could provide the requested information within the statutory timeframe. If you consider that any part of this request requires clarification to enable compliance, please let us know.

SP received your request on 05/01/2026 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SP's response to your enquiry is as follows:

In accordance with Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, this letter represents a refusal notice for this request.

The following exemption has been applied:

- Section 12(1) where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit.

Section 12(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the prescribed limit'.

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There is no method by which SP can readily retrieve information from our systems to answer question 1 of this request. In relation to the notifications received by SP, the abnormal load inbox receives between 400-1000 emails per day, only movements that require police intervention are responded to. In order to ascertain whether a notification was received in relation to movements to or from Froghall Junction, each email would have to be manually checked. To extract this data would therefore require a very labour-intensive manual trawl through each one.

From dip sampling, it has been estimated that it would take approximately 5 minutes to review each email to answer this request, this would equate to between 33 and 83 hours. To achieve this task would therefore exceed the 18-hour time and cost threshold of the FOI Act by a considerable margin.

Advice and assistance

Section 16 of the Act places an obligation upon the Authority to provide advice and assistance, to comply with this obligation please see below.

In order to refine your request with regards to question 1, data can be provided for how many police escorts were provided or were deemed appropriate for a police escort between January 2024 & January 2026.



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Data can also be provided for questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. However, please be advised that partial data is only held from January 2024 to January 2026 and that further exemptions may be applied.

Please be advised that all Freedom of Information request responses are published on the SP website although personal details are not included.

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from SP, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing within two months of the date of receipt of this email, and should be addressed to:

IAT@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Information Access Team
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Information Access Team within two months of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing. The review will be conducted by a supervisor who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Information Access Team will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within 20 working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The independent Supervisor will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, considering the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal



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On completion of the review the Independent Supervisor will reply to the appellant with the result of the review. If the appellant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following link:
<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/foi-and-eir-complaints/foi-and-eir-complaints/>

Freedom of Information
Information Access Team